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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 50/187 of 22 December 1995 on the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights, the General Assembly, noting that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the World Conference on Human Rights stressed the importance of strengthening the Centre for Human Rights and taking into account the establishment of the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the mandate for the post, including its coordinating role and its overall supervision of the Centre, as well as the request by the Assembly in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993 for appropriate staff and resources to enable the High Commissioner to fulfil his mandate, requested the Secretary-General to make available additional human and financial resources, within the overall regular budget of the United Nations, to enhance the capability of the High Commissioner and of the Centre to fulfil effectively their respective mandates and also requested him to submit an interim report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-second session and a final report to the Assembly at its fifty-first session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. In connection with the establishment of the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/141, the Secretary-General submitted a statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/48/61), indicating that, while the High Commissioner would draw on the resources of the Centre to fulfil his tasks, a number of additional posts (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5 and three General Service posts) and

operational funds would be required, totalling $1,471,400. The Assembly did not approve those posts at its forty-eighth session, but authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of up to $1,471,400 and in connection with the establishment of the office of the High Commissioner decided to consider such additional appropriation as might be necessary and not to exceed $1,471,400 at its resumed forty-eighth session. At that session, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of the question to its forty-ninth session. In his report to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session (A/C.5/49/53), the Secretary-General, on the basis of experience, proposed that instead of the six above-mentioned posts (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5 and three General Service posts) nine posts be provided for the High Commissioner and his office (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5, one P-4 and three General Service for Geneva and one D-1 and one General Service post for the New York Office). The Secretary-General indicated in that report that it was estimated that the revised requirements of the High Commissioner, as defined above, could be met from within the balance of the amount for which the Secretary-General was authorized to enter into commitment, that is, $1,471,400.

3. Regarding the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/121, it will be recalled that in the related statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/48/46), the Secretary-General indicated that one P-5, one P-4 and two General Service posts would be required, as well as operational funds totalling $1,167,500. The Assembly did not approve those posts at its forty-eighth session, but authorized the Secretary-General to enter into all the commitments necessary within the above amount in respect of the full implementation of the activities envisaged in the resolution and to consider such additional appropriation as might be necessary and not to exceed $1,167,500 at its resumed forty-eighth session. At that session, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of the question to its forty-ninth session. In his report to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session (A/C.5/49/53), the Secretary-General requested the appropriation of the amount of $1,167,500.

4. Concerning the continuing United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia, the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session did not appropriate the additional resources of $1,834,100 requested by the Secretary-General in his report of 31 May 1994 (A/C.5/48/78). Instead, the Assembly took note of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in its report (A/48/7/Add.12) and authorized the Secretary-General to enter into additional commitments up to $1,834,100 under section 21, Human rights, of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 1/ for the financing of human rights activities in Cambodia. In his report to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session (A/C.5/49/53), the Secretary-General requested the appropriation of $1,834,100 for that purpose.

5. In summary, in his report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session (A/C.5/49/53), the Secretary-General requested an appropriation of $4,473,000 under section 21 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, representing the level of resources for which commitment authority had initially been extended in respect of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the implementation of the Vienna Plan of Action and the human rights presence in Cambodia.

6. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly decided to appropriate, on an exceptional basis, $4,473,000 under section 21 on the understanding that the posts requested by the Secretary-General for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Centre for Human Rights and the human rights presence in Cambodia had been approved on a temporary basis and that all posts would be subject to a detailed review by the Advisory Committee and the Assembly at the earliest opportunity at the resumed forty-ninth session.

7. In section 21 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, 2/ the Secretary-General requested (a) the establishment of a new P-5 post to strengthen the administrative function of the Centre; (b) the establishment of a new P-3 post to assist the High Commissioner; (c) the conversion of the 21 temporary regular budget posts approved for 1994-1995 to the category of established regular budget posts (including the post of the High Commissioner at the Under-Secretary-General level, four Professional and four General Service posts for the High Commissioner's Office, two Professional and two General Service posts for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and eight Professional posts for the Cambodia field office); and (d) the redeployment and downgrading of a D-2 post from executive direction and management to the D-1 level to head the International Instruments Branch of the Centre for Human Rights.

8. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which considered the proposed programme budget of the Secretary-General for the biennium 1996-1997 in August 1995, concluded that with the exception of the Under-Secretary-General post of the High Commissioner, one P-5 and two General Service posts in the Office of the High Commissioner, the decision to convert the remaining 17 temporary posts, approved in 1994-1995, into established posts in 1996-1997 should be deferred until the results of the restructuring of the programme of work of the Centre and identification of priorities was completed. With regard to the proposal for two new established posts in 1996-1997, the Committee did not agree with the establishment of the new P-3 post in the Office of the High Commissioner, but recommended the establishment of the new P-5 post to discharge all the functions of an administrative/executive officer in the Centre.

9. The General Assembly, by its resolution 50/214, taking into account the ongoing process of restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights, decided that the Secretary-General should report by 31 March 1996 to it at its resumed fiftieth session, making proposals on the appropriate level and distribution of resources for the Centre for Human Rights, and endorsed, pending consideration of that report, the recommendations of the Advisory Committee as contained in its first report on the proposed programme budget, as outlined above.

10. The Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its resumed fiftieth session the report requested by it in its resolution 50/214 entitled "Restructuring the Centre for Human Rights" (A/C.5/50/71). Additional information was submitted to the Assembly during its fifty-first session (A/C.5/50/71/Add.1).

11. In its resolution 1996/82 of 24 April 1996, the Commission on Human Rights, taking note of the report of the Secretary-General 3/ supported and encouraged

the efforts of the Secretary-General to enhance the role and further improve the functioning of the Centre for Human Rights, under the overall supervision of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and requested the Secretary-General to make available additional human and financial resources, from within the overall regular budget of the United Nations, and to enhance the capability of the High Commissioner and the Centre to fulfil their mandates effectively.

12. Finally, it is noted that, in the context of achieving the savings mandated by the General Assembly, 12 posts of the Centre for Human Rights (1 D-1, 1 P-5, 3 P-4, 3 P-3 and 4 GS (Other level)) have been frozen until the end of the biennium 1996-1997.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/48/6/Rev. 1), vol. II.

2/ Ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), vol. II.

3/ E/CN.4/1996/116.